

What is claimed is:

- 1 1. In an interactive library system having a computer in telecommunication link with
- 2 at least one user computer and computer of at least one content provider requiring
- 3 payment for information access, a method which comprises:
- 4 receiving, by the library system computer, user identification and password from
- 5 the user computer;
- 6 comparing, by the library system computer, said received user identification and
- 7 password with authorized user identifications and corresponding passwords stored in
- 8 the library system to determine whether to grant access to the interactive library system;
- 9 if comparison results in grant of access, then the library system is capable of
- 10 performing one or both of the following:
- 11 (1) receiving, by the library system computer, input from the user computer
- 12 specifying type of information desired by the user;
- 13 establishing, by the library system computer, telecommunication link with
- 14 the content provider computer;
- 15 transmitting, by the library system computer, said type of information
- 16 desired by the user as a search request to the content provider computer;
- 17 receiving, by the library system computer, result of said search request
- 18 from the content provider computer; and
- 19 providing, by the library system computer, said result to the user
- 20 computer;
- 21 (2) setting, by the library system computer, the user's privileges;

22 if the user's privileges correspond to a first preselected level of access,
23 then providing, by the library system computer, access to information in a Deal Room;
24 and
25 if the user's privileges correspond to a second preselected level of access,
26 then providing, by the library system computer, right to modify Deal Room information
27 and/or upload electronic files to the Deal Room.

1 2. The method of claim 1, further comprising:

2 customizing a user interface provided by the interactive library system to the user
3 computer based on type of information desired by the user.

1 3. The method of claim 1, further comprising:

2 providing a user interface, by the interactive library system to the user computer,
3 that includes an interactive element, the selection of the interactive element by the user
4 activating a communication program to enable communication with a pre-selected
5 contactee.

1 4. The method of claim 1, further comprising:

2 if the user's privileges correspond to a third preselected level of access, then
3 providing, by the library system computer, right to create a Deal Room.

1 5. The method of claim 4, wherein the creation of the Deal Room is through a
2 software application program provided by the library system computer.

1 6. The method of claim 1, further comprising:
2 determining, by the library system computer, time amount of access to the
3 interactive library system by the user computer; and
4 storing, in the library system, the time amount of access to the interactive library
5 system by the user computer.

1 7. The method of claim 6, further comprising:
2 generating an account statement after a preselected period of time based on the
3 time amount of access for the user computer stored in the library system.

1 8. The method of claim 1, further comprising:
2 determining, by the library system computer, time amount of access by the user
3 computer to each content provider; and
4 storing, by the library system, the time amount of access by the user computer to
5 each content provider.

1 9. The method of claim 8, further comprising:
2 generating an account statement after a preselected period of time based on the
3 time amount of access by the user computer to each content provider stored in the
4 library system.

1 10. The method of claim 1, further comprising:
2 determining, by the library system computer, time amount of access by the user
3 computer via the library system computer to each content provider requiring payment
4 for information access; and
5 storing, by the library system, the time amount of access by the user computer to
6 each content provider requiring payment for information access.

1 11. The method of claim 10, further comprising:
2 generating an account statement after a preselected period of time based on the
3 time amount of access by the user computer to each content provider requiring payment
4 for information access stored in the library system.

1 12. The method of claim 1, further comprising:
2 determining, by the library system computer, number of the search requests
3 transmitted to the content providers for the user computer; and
4 storing, by the library system, the number of search requests transmitted for the
5 user computer.

1 13. The method of claim 12, further comprising:
2 generating an account statement after a preselected period of time based on the
3 number of search requests for the user computer stored in the library system.

1 14. The method of claim 1, further comprising:
2 accessing, by the content providers accessed by the user computer through the
3 library system, preselected user information stored in the library system; and
4 generating an account statement, by the content providers accessed by the user
5 computer, after a preselected time period based on the preselected user information
6 stored in the library system.

1 15. The method of claim 1, further comprising:
2 receiving, by the library system computer, input from the user computer
3 specifying a preselected time interval for transmitting search request to the content
4 provider.

1 16. The method of claim 1, further comprising:
2 notifying, by the library system computer, the user computer that the result of the
3 search request is ready for review by the user.

1 17. The method of claim 16, wherein the notification is by electronic communication.

1 18. An interactive library system providing telecommunication links with at least one
2 user computer and computer of at least one content provider requiring payment for
3 information access, which comprises:
4 a library computer adapted to receive and transmit data over telecommunication
5 links, the library computer having a microprocessor and a first storage unit;

6 a second storage unit electrically coupled to the library computer to store user
7 identifications, corresponding passwords and levels of access;
8 a third storage unit electrically coupled to the library computer to store
9 information relating to a Deal Room;
10 a program, operable on the microprocessor, stored in the first storage unit, the
11 program comparing user identification and password received from the user computer
12 with the user identifications and corresponding passwords stored in the second storage
13 unit to determine whether the user computer is authorized; and
14 the program, if the user computer is determined to be authorized, causing one or
15 both of the following: (i) the library computer to communicate with the content provider
16 computer to transmit type of information desired by the user as a search request and to
17 receive result of the search request; (ii) setting the user computer's privileges such that
18 if the user computer's privileges correspond to a first preselected level of access, then
19 causing the library system computer to provide access to information in the Deal Room,
20 and if the user computer's privileges correspond to a second preselected level of
21 access, then causing the library system computer to provide right to modify Deal Room
22 information and/or upload electronic files to the Deal Room.

1 19. The interactive library system of claim 18, which further comprises:
2 a fourth storage unit electrically coupled to the library computer to store user-
3 specific data.

1 20. The interactive library system of claim 19, wherein the user-specific data includes
2 customized user interface data.

1 21. The interactive library system of claim 19, wherein the user-specific data includes
2 user account data.

1 22. The interactive library system of claim 21, wherein the user account data
2 includes time amount of access by the user computer to the library computer.

1 23. The interactive library system of claim 21, wherein the user account data
2 includes time amount of access by the user computer via the library computer to the
3 computer of each content provider requiring payment for information access.

1 24. The interactive library system of claim 19, wherein the second and fourth storage
2 units are the same.